

I took this position one year ago with good intentions. But for whatever reasons I didn't follow through. The LSC is small and things appear to go along fine. We seem to just let it go and don't try to get in the way; hopefully, we don't make it worse, but we aren't improving it either. I would like to see that change. For whatever reason, I have new motivation and would like to see people in the LSC get excited and work toward improving their teams and the LSC. I will try to lead in that effort but I need your help.

I won't have much to report on last year; I would like to focus on the future. I will cover a few items from last year. I really can't speak to issues like number of swimmers, number of teams, or financial status because I really don't know them. I expect to hear more about these at the House of Delegates meeting, but I feel out of touch with the status of the LSC. However, it shouldn't be just the General Chairman who has this information. I would like to see us tracking our progress and making that information available to everyone in the LSC. I think we should be doing more in areas of goal setting for the LSC and have more of a vision where the LSC is going. As I have said in previous ramblings the LSC can't improve unless the clubs grow and improve. The LSC can be the focal point to help teams, provide guidance, resources, etc. I think the LSC needs to be more structured, following existing guidelines, creating guidance where necessary, documenting our policies, and being more accountable to the teams. I don't think we need this just for the sake of imposing rules. Instead, it is necessary to create an entity which everyone knows what to expect and can move on to more important roles of building the base, promoting the sport, and achieving success. We need to improve our communications so everyone knows what is going on, what to expect, and where to find information.

On the positive side, I think the changes we made in the championship formats were improvements. I know you can never make everyone happy but I think we have moved in the right direction. I expect we will continue to tweak them hopefully to improve the level of competition and enjoyment of these meets.

Dina and I had the great pleasure of chaperoning this year's Western Zone Team. It was a wonderful experience, travelling and living with 24 of the LSC's outstanding athletes and the coaching staff. As parents and members of Snake River Swimming, you should all be proud of the way these swimmers competed and conducted themselves. I would like to see this LSC focus more on the Zone Meet. I believe we should encourage swimmers to target this meet, and set goals for the performance of the LSC team. I feel this is one way the LSC can achieve success is by a strong Zone Team. That is why I believe we should begin planning for the 2005 Zone Meet.

I appreciate the opportunity to attend the 2004 USA Swimming convention, representing Snake River Swimming. It was a new and different experience for me. I came back with an appreciation of what is done at Convention and how important it is. To educate those who never had the opportunity to attend convention it is made up of three days of committee meetings, workshops, education sessions, zone meetings. A lot of new information is presented and gathered in these meetings. Normally anyone can give their opinion or ask questions. Many of the discussions are used to help members and direct USA Swimming to areas where the membership needs help. This year there was much focus on the improvements and future plans USA Swimming has made with the revenue from the dues increase. The actual House of Delegates meeting, Friday evening and Saturday, is where you hear about the state of USA Swimming, hold elections, and pass legislation.

I believe USA Swimming has done a great job with improvements like the new website, the SWIMS database, adding field service staff (zone consultants, sports performance consultants, master coach consultants), marketing help like videos resources, adding a facilities development section, etc. I think USA Swimming has come a long way in providing resources to help the clubs and LSCs. We have to make use of these resources. We may not always get the answer we want or may have to work through some levels with USA Swimming but I believe USA Swimming is working hard and has made a marked improvement in this area. We have to take advantage of it.

The website is one of the biggest improvements. Until recently I have not looked much at the website. I am very impressed with the amount of useful information available on the USA Swimming's website. All of us should be using it on a routine basis.

Here is a list of meetings I attended:

- Officials Committee Meeting/Workshop
- Rules & Regulation Committee
- Novice to National (How They Did It)
- Western Zone Meetings
- Club Resources and Drug Control
- Tricks, Tips, & Traps - Club & LSC Financial Management
- Water Works Workshop (Marketing)
- General Chair Luncheon
- Registration Meeting on Electronic Registration
- Burning Issues for Officials
- Club Fundraising Committee
- LSC Board of review Workshop
- Best Practices of LSC Web Masters
- House of Delegates

I will give a brief synopsis of these meetings

Officials – The two USA Swimming Officials that attend Olympics discussed their experiences. To build the officials base, new training materials are being created and old material updated and converted to CDs or DVD, the Officials web page has been expanded and new material added. A new proposal for the level of official's certification was presented and discussed.

Rules and Regulation Committee – proposed rules were discussed. I will discuss a few that caught me interest but you may want to check out the USA Swimming website to see the result of all the legislation. I thought the only significant technical rule change dealt with in-the-water starts and even that was not significant. There was much debate on a rule that would require all coaches to undergo a background check and a rule requiring all directors and officers of the club to be USA Swimming members. Neither rule passed, however a resolution was given to the board of directors that the house of delegates endorsed the requirement for background checks.

Novice to National – a panel of coaches responded to questions regarding how they recognize and promote talented athletes and how to grow your program. Each coach may have had a slightly different perspective, but some common themes were: keep it fun, goal setting, a passion for the sport but both the coach and swimmer, technique training, it can't be more important to the coach or parent, keep parents involved, know all your swimmers, create an energetic environment, have your program speak for itself, think as swimming as a business then focus on performance, coaches - if you are looking for money or recognition for having an Olympian, you're not in the right profession. There was much more but these are some of the highlights I took away.

Western Zone Meetings – We had several meetings of just the western zone. Each zone has four elected positions. This year two positions were up for election. The Western Zone Director – Coach is Vickie Marsh from Inland Empire. Our own Linda Conger was elected as Age Group Planning Committee – Coach representative. We should be well represented in the Western Zone. Anchorage was selected for the site of the 2006 zone meet.

Registration – This meeting focused on use of electronic registration. It seems a lot of LSCs use electronic registration. The meeting discussed ideas how to improve it, how LSCs handle issues, and good ideas from various LSCs. For all of you that think Dina is strict, you would be surprised by some of the registration chairman out there. I know Dina would like to improve & expand in the area of registration of our swimmers.

Fundraising – The fundraising handbook is on the website and I believe it was updated. The prize levels for Swim-a-thon were changed to reward more swimmers. They have done away with the trip to the Olympic Training center and will award those that raise more than \$500. There was discussion of fundraising to build or remodel a pool. This got into closure of pools. The bottom line is 50 meter competition pools will not pay for themselves, about 50% of the operating fees should be expected. There were other discussions; one was that clubs need to consider the value of their services and use value received pricing, stop the \$5 swim lesson. In USA Swimming's new Division to help clubs with these types of decisions, there are three individuals to help clubs with questions and plans for with everything from building a pool, remodeling an existing pool, and operating. They can help with programs and just the running of a facility, including issues like air and water quality, learn to swim programs, etc. If you have any questions I suggest contacting them, I have their names. I suggest checking out the USA Swimming website for a description of their services.

Club resources and drug control – Covered the existing and planned services USA Swimming provides including Swimposium. The drug control section was a very informative presentation on supplements.

LSC Board of Review – This discussed the board of review process. It is a very formal process to resolve disputes or take action against a member. They should be handled pretty much as a legal proceeding. They have power to fine or remove membership. There is both a LSC board of review and national board of review. Certain code of conduct violations go straight to a national board of review. There were specific discussion of how to conduct a board of review.

Financial – This was a review of requirements and good practices associated with financial management of clubs and LSCs. Issues such as reporting requirements for non-profit organizations, internal controls suggestions, and investments.

Web Site Development – This was a workshop for web masters so they could share ideas and good practices about web site design and development. There was discussion about what to post, privacy issues, software, etc. There are many good ideas there and I believe help is available. This is an area I would like to see grow in our LSC.

Water Works – this was a workshop where USA Swimming was trying to get ideas from the clubs what they can do to help marketing swimming, including whether teams want posters, flyers, videos, TV type ads etc., what would work to promote the sport, ideas of having a national swim day and national level advertising in USA Today, using the success of the Olympics and upcoming world championships, and next year's dual in the pool.

I tried to give you a sense of these meetings. I would be glad to discuss any additional details with you or you might try the USA Swimming website to get more information.

I view this as just the beginning. I do not have all the answers nor I'm I sure how exactly to proceed. I do know it will take all of us. Many heads are better than one. I also know it will take time, but we can no longer wait for someone else to do it. We should not be content to accept that we agreed to serve the LSC but do little or nothing to improve it. I hope teams will share ideas and mentoring between teams will begin. The LSC can help foster this. I hope you will use the resources at USA Swimming to build the base, promote the sport, and achieve success, within Snake River Swimming.